

Sri Sri Guru Gauranga Jayatah
ABSOLUTE HARMONY

Compiled and Edited from the Informal Discourses of



Srila B.R. Sridhar Dev Goswami

Compiled and Edited by:
Madhura Krishna das Adhikari
Typing and Transcribing by:
Dina Tarini devi dasi

HIS MAGICAL TOUCH

Like the touchstone turning iron into gold, the lowest receives the highest position by the magical touch of that sweet all wonderful substance, and He is called Krsna, beauty personified who can harmonize the most undesirable base nature of this world simply through contact with His Holy Name.

Everyone wants pleasure, all are searching after happiness, but they do not know how to search it our properly. What is true lasting pleasure? A scientific search of pleasure or bliss will reveal Krsnanusandhana. All seeking will culminate in Him, the emporium of all rasas, the epitome of all taste, the combination of all different types of that pleasing substance which alone can supply ecstasy, love and harmony within us.

Srila B. R. Sridhar Dev Goswami

Foreword

Dedicated the Divine Feet of
Srila B. S. Govinda Dev-Goswami Maharaj

In Eternal Memory and Service to His Divine Grace

Srila Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj

In 1991-92 sincere followers of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu are joyfully celebrating the Auspicious Golden Jubilee Year of the Holy Temple of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, which is situated at Sri Gupta Govardhana, the *aparadha-bhanjana-pat*, on the bank of the Ganges at Sri Koladwip within the sacred mandala of Sri Nabadwip Dham.

During 1941, at a time when most of the people of the western world were involved in waging a useless war upon one another, wasting their precious lives in battle for power and supremacy, a pure saint by the name of Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Maharaj was busy fulfilling the sweet will of his Guru, Thakur Sri Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami, establishing a place where world-weary souls could come and take sanctuary in Divine Service to the Manifest Deities: Their Lordships Sri Sri Guru Gauranga Gandharvva Govindasundarjiu.

In the overgrown jungle where cobras and tigers roamed our beloved Srila Guru Maharaj, Sridhar Maharaj, lived in a simple thatched hut (bhajan kutir) and began worship of their Lordships, through which the glorious vision of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math crystalised to the world.

Far from being just an architectural form of charming symmetry - something it may superficially appear to be in the eyes of a layman -this wonderful spiritual residence was designed and built to accommodate God and His devotees who would come to serve Him from every quarter of the globe. And that abode of revelation continues to unfold in the 1990's through the graceful hands and heart of Srila Sridhar Maharaj's successor, and most treasured servitor Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Maharaj.

In the early years of the 1940's our Spiritual Father, Srila Guru Maharaj, was laying the foundations for fulfilment of the Lord's grand plan to shelter the whole world through this archetype of a loving Home Sweet Home. In the Transcendental Realm of Sri Nabadwip proper the glory of this Tirtha, this sacred site, is always expanding.

A virtual beehive of dedication and service this Central Math is the Vaishnavas (devotees) who live there, serving the Holy Names of Sri Guru and Sri Gauranga (Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu). Without the Vaishnavas a temple is nothing but a form without substance. So we desperately beg and pray to imbibe a drop of their all-merciful grace. Only through them we can understand Srila Guru Maharaj and His will. In their devoted spirit, Srila Guru Maharaj is present in the true sense.

When our hearts are touched by the grace of those *ananya-bhaktas*, the Vaishnavas who reside in this perfect environment for divine service, only then will the beautifully splendid inner vision of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math become manifest to us. At that time may we place our face in the most blessed dust of that sacred ground where they walk, in full jubilant *sastanga dandabats* (prostrate obeisance). Realising, then, the inestimable great fortune of purest *sadhu-sanga*, (saintly association) manifestly present at Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math for these past fifty years – every moment being golden in the perfect company of Srila Guru Maharaj. (In the words of Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur, “when will that day be ours?”)

We can only appeal to and invite all the sincere souls of the world to please include a visit here when making a pilgrimage to the Holy Dham of Nabadwip, the Abode of Lord Sri Krishna Chaitanya. Take *darshan* (insight) at the *aparadha-bhanjan-pat* where all *aparadha* (previous offence) is absolved through the blessing of the saintly souls there during this most auspicious Golden Jubilee Year of the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math.

For you will find that the magnanimous dispensation of Mercy, started by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and continued by the Grace of Srila Guru Maharaj, is now being freely distributed to the extreme – just like in Nityananda Prabhu's magnanimous mood – through Srila Govinda Maharaj; with the full backing and blessings of the whole Gaudiya Sampradaya.

We humbly hope and pray this prayer: that the enlightening revelations which have sprung from the lotus-like heart of our Srila Guru Maharaj may give true solace to all who receive them, and that through the mystic connection to Divine knowledge, true understanding and harmony will come.

We gratefully acknowledge the kind assistance and contributions of all those dedicated servitors of Sri Sri Guru and Gauranga whose sincere wish to distribute such merciful nectar is, in itself, its own reward.

We also wish to take this opportunity, if we may, to invite all who read this small offering to please take *darshan*, the living association, of His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswami Maharaj in the course of his coming world tour in June/July 1992. For Srila Govinda Maharaj is truly the living manifest embodiment not only of the most perfect conclusions. Indeed of all the previous *acharyyas*, the Vaishnava Gurus, who are celebrating in a *sankirttan* – a chanting festival of divine love – around his blessed presence. We beg all those who have any attraction to the service of Sri Chaitanya Maharapbhu’s wish to spread His benediction rays from the east to the western world to put aside all personal ambition, and all sectarian religious differences, and kindly bless us with your participation in this glorious event which will baptise the entire world under the Aurora Borealis of Mahaprabhu’s banner of Divine Love. In the words of Srila Guru Maharaj, “The conquest of love is perfect for those who wish to be conquered.”

Madhura Krishna das

The Harmonising Spirit

Disciple: The more intense dedication becomes, the more disappointed I become. How is that possible?

Sila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj (Srila Guru Maharaj): You will find in Hegel’s philosophy, “Die to Live.” So you must not be a miser. You are to fully die as you are at present. You are to put your false self into the fire and allow the alloy to be

eliminated. The pure gold will then manifest with its dazzling colour. Of course the soul does not die, but those alloyed things – the mind, body and so many other false aspirations – will be reduced to ashes by the fire of dedication. So die in order to live in the real world.

Disciple: If everyone had that spirit, Maharaj, there would be no breakups, and factions as are found in so many religions and sects.

Srila Guru Maharaj: But everyone is not normal. There are differences. And those engaged in the abnormal cannot follow the perfect course. Everyone has some imperfection and defect.

The Lord's *lila* (Pastimes) are for his satisfaction, but even there we find some differences in the group of the perfect servants although they are in their normal position in His domain, Vrindavan. So competition and fighting to satisfy the Lord's sweet will is acceptable. Nothing can be bad in His domain. If fighting is satisfaction for the Lord, then we can do that. We should not be disappointed to find differences, but we should try to find the common interest.

Disciple: But if we neglect Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Mission of giving *prema-bhakti* to the fallen souls and fight only for our won selfishness and prestige, I think there is something wrong with that.

Srila Guru Maharaj: A course of treatment is given to a hospital patient, but as one disease is located and treated another disease may emerge. As that second disease is treated another disease may come out, and then another.

Sin is in the aspirants, not in those who are perfect. Those who come to Krishna consciousness are all patients. This is not a place of normal healthy persons but a place for patients who are being purified through a course of treatment. And that process is called *sadhana bhakti*.

Disciple: So where are the doctors, Maharaj?

Srila Guru Maharaj: There may not be expert doctors but there are so many students in the process of learning and they are practising accordingly. You cannot expect absolute knowledge everywhere. Research into nuclear fusion, whether in Russia or America, is always

progressive; it is always in a middle stage, a relative position – and it can be expected that they may never find the full extent of nuclear science. But because progress is always in a relative position it does not mean the Absolute does not exist. Also it does not mean that the campaign should be given up. No! Everything may be defective but still we are to continue.

Aspire for Maximum Good

Although all is not perfect, still we are to progress with our daily food and activities, as we have to maintain ourselves and aspire for the maximum good. We have to make the best of a bad bargain with whatever is available to us. The absolute position is not easily attained. Everyone of us has to pass through relative position towards the Absolute. There is elimination and acceptance everywhere – this is the meaning of progress, and we cannot avoid it. But elimination should not be done inconsiderately. At the same time our object will always be the higher aim.

*Sarva-dharman parityajya,
Mam ekam saranam vraja
Aham tvam sarva-papebhyo,
Mokayisyami ma sucah
(Srimad Bhagavad-gita 18.66)*

Lord Krishna says, “Totally abandoning all kinds of religion, surrender exclusively unto Me. I will liberate you from all kinds of sins, so do not despair.”

In every subject there is progress and we are not to blame others for whatever comes to us; rather the whole burden of this trouble is ours. No one else is to be blamed. Everywhere there is the hand of the Absolute. When there is a government a hooligan may be detailed but if there is no order or government there criminals can run amok. There is the Absolute government and we cannot escape that law. According to our karma we do things to others and receive the reactions: it is controlled, it is not anarchy. So we are to suffer and enjoy the fruit of our own karma – the fruit of our own action – that is

the law. When we think, “I am responsible for all my lawlessness,” there will be a favourable time ahead and we shall be released. When a criminal sees that the punishment being dealt him is justified, with atonement he may be released and may not commit any nuisance afterwards. Similarly, when we realise we are suffering from our own reactions, then we will come to the door of real salvation.

In order to illustrate that our own karma has created our present environment we can adapt the saying, “A bad workman quarrels with his tools,” to: “A bad workman quarrels with his stools.” We have earned such an atmosphere by our previous karma, our previous actions, and no-one else is to be blamed. This is the advice of Srimad Bhagavatam and when, in fact, we come to realise this truth then our day of liberation will be near. Do you follow?

Disciple: Yes, I follow clearly.

Srila Guru Maharaj: So now you can make no further question? Where do you find your prospect?

Disciple: I am simply disappointed with politics and the differences between religious institutions.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Previously when Einstein came and spoke out against Newton, he was insulted, but later the community recognised, “Oh, Einstein is above Newton.”

So don’t forget you are in the infinite. There are many different parties and they may have many different convictions according to their capacity to understand the truth. They are of variegated nature and therefore there cannot but be variety and difference, and for some that may result in internal or external quarrel.

First the followers of Newton took their stand against Einstein, but gradually they found that what Einstein was saying was true and moreover that he was giving a higher conception than Newton. It was not the third but the fourth dimension which was given by Einstein.

So the possibility of the future must be calculated within the present, otherwise any estimation is not proper. Things are always

changing. The factor of change must be calculated within the present otherwise it is not complete.

Spontaneous Devotion in the Fifth Dimension

Now in the spiritual arena Bhagavan Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came and manifest the fifth dimension which was above and beyond all previous conceptions but still accommodating them all. Prior to that the fourth dimension – Vaikuntha – was given by Ramanuja, the third dimension was given by Sankaracharya and the second dimension was given by Buddha.

Buddha recognised the existence of the subtle body and concluded that with the dissolution of that subtle body nothing remains. Then Sankaracharya said, “The subtle body is only a reflection of a further thing, Brahman, which is itself true and eternal; and this world is also a reflection of that. With the dissolution of the reflection, the individual soul dissolves forever and nothing but Brahman remains.” There are in fact so very many differences amongst their disciples.

Sankaracharya and Buddha both preferred that the ultimate goal be non-differentiated, unknown and unknowable, and they finished there. Do you wish to go there? Elimination of all diversity may be a very peaceful position, a deep slumber, and that is their goal. There are many followers of that creed. But their sacrifice is of a lesser degree than those who dedicate themselves to the higher plane.

Ramanuja said, “There is another world on the opposite side.” This material world is the world of exploitation and beyond that is liberation – brahma-nirvana – but on the other side of that is the positive plane which is purely subjective and full of dedication. That is the fourth dimension, Vaikuntha, the land of Vishnu.

Then Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu gave the additional conception. Explaining: “Calculative dedication in Vaikuntha is one thing but spontaneous dedication to Krishna in Goloka is another. And the

highest ideal is not spontaneous dedication to power and majesty, but to beauty.” And this has been clearly proved.

Sankaracharyya said, “All is one, there is no variety.” But Mahaprabhu points out, “If there is no variety, how can the question of unity arise?” If there is variety then there must be the question of unity. So in this world we are to make proper adjustments.

We want higher sacrifice, living dedication and tolerance for the Central Truth. That Truth we see as Personal, and with His own will. We must admit that, if we want to have entrance into that world.

Nectar and Poison

Dedication to Krishna is nectar and exploitation of this material energy is poison. And what the followers of Sankara and Buddha want is the middle position where everything is harmonised into death – the plane of cessation of difference. That is *brahma-nirvana*, the final peace devoid of trouble where all are buried in eternal slumber. If you prefer then you can go there. But what you find in this world is the reflection of the original whole, perverted into exploitation. On the other side is dedication. In the group of servitors practicing pure dedication, even their quarrel becomes beautiful. Whatever is found here is found there totally. Try to understand this general principle.

A poison may be utilised as medicine when applied properly. The *mayavadis* (impersonalists) cannot find any harmony in difference, they can only find harmony in the conception of non-differentiated Brahman consciousness. They cannot keep up the beautiful harmony in variety held by the Vaisnavas. Rather they consider that everything must be merged into one to solve the problems of the world. Other than that they have no solution, but only disturbance.

With the qualifications of humility, patience and forbearance, with no tendency to seek self-glory, but rather to glorify others and honour their respectable existence, we can live happily with our neighbours and the whole environment. Mahaprabhu has given this solution to us and we are to equip ourselves in this way.

Why should you think your neighbour to be undesirable? You are not to complain against the environment but you are to control yourself and come to the proper understanding. With proper adjustment you will find everything to be harmonious: the desired land of your life. At home you shall find everything.

Love for Betrayal

Srila Guru Maharaj: Do you know of Judas in the Christian teachings?

Disciple: Yes, he betrayed Jesus.

Srila Guru Maharaj: When Jesus was praying in the garden before his crucifixion, Judas approached him with the scribes and priests in order to betray him, identifying that Messiah with a kiss. Suddenly, Jesus cast his glance towards Judas in such an impressive way – he penetrated Judas. And Judas thought to himself, “I am caught, I shall be responsible for Jesus Christ’s demise,” but still Jesus’ vision to me was something more like: “I am exploiting you Judas. It is not that you are exploiting me, rather I am utilising you as a traitor to show the greatness of my life to the future world.”

Jesus has already said (at his last supper), “Amongst these twelve disciples one will betray me.” He knew. Judas had been there then and Jesus had cast his glance towards Judas. Then later, when Judas came with the soldiers and scribes to the garden of Gethsemene to capture him, Jesus had cast his glance towards Judas once again and was thinking, “You think you are exploiting me for some money but I am exploiting you for eternity. You have to stand out as a sinful person against me, I knew you were a traitor, but I did not disclose you. I still took you within my group of followers knowing full well that I am exploiting you.” The look of Jesus was like that.

Judas was crazed. He threw away the sack of silver. He ran to the authorities and said, “I have committed the worst sin, I cannot tolerate it!”

Judas’ energy was drunk, his spirit was drawn. Just like in Jujitsu, when someone attacks the opposition with great force, but the opposition suddenly withdraws, causing the attacking person to fall on their face – Judas found himself in that sort of position. Jesus was exchanging love for betrayal. It was the sort of love that disarmed and sent Judas mad. “I treated him so wickedly, yet his look is not one of vindictiveness but of infinite gratitude. That sort of look Jesus cast upon me.”

In the perfect vision, in the full-fledged consideration, every atom is helping the Pastimes of Krishna. Whether it is direct or indirect – and although it seems to be indirect at present – a deeper vision will reveal that it is coming towards direct service.

Jagai and Madhai came, in the beginning, to physically beat Nityananda Prabhu. Yet later they became submissive. They ended up singing the Holy Names of Nityananda and Gauranga, showing an example to the public. They showed, “We, the worst rogues, are converted into honest men by the mercy of our benevolent Lord.” They enhanced the beauty of the conduct of the Lord by sacrifice. To play the negative role, great sacrifice is required. They gave way their own fame to make the Lord glorious forever. The depth of our vision will detect these things.

We will see so much direct service even from the indirect section. Maya and Satan are also rendering service to God. Without darkness, light cannot be perceived. To play the part of darkness, to show the greatness of light, sacrifice is required. Satan is illuminating God’s greatness. He is apparently negative but Satan’s contribution makes God so magnanimous. If Satan did not exist then how could we understand the goodness and greatness of God? Everywhere there is the Grace of God.

Mahadev, Lord Shiva, sometimes repents and mourns, “Oh Lord, what can I do! You are Absolute and You have engaged me to

accept the position of leader of the opposition party I am going against you because I am giving encouragement to the demons, this most unfortunate post has been given to me by You, but since Your order is unchallengeable then what to do! I am following Your order but my heart is not satisfied my Lord!” So, Shiva is a devotee but sometimes he gives opposition to Krishna or Vishnu. He encourages the demoniac powers against the Lord. In an indirect way he fights against Krishna with his followers the Bhuta demons.

The Cure for Madness

Ignorance is not accidental, it is earned by our previous action – man is the architect of his own fortune. The bad weather I am meeting with at present has been earned by myself. Don’t complain against the environment. Utilise it as best you can and try to see the Grace of the Absolute therein. The anomaly I am facing at this present time is the product of my own action, no-one else is to blame. Not only is that true; but from another viewpoint it can also be seen that the Grace of the Lord is always present everywhere – eager to help me – coming in the guise of an apparently unfavourable environment according to the vision of my present experience. That is the necessary medicine for my disease, the medicine to cure my madness. It is like medicine dispensed by the Lord. He is everywhere with His sympathetic hand extended to us in the circumstances of most intense danger. To have this attitude is to have the key, the solution that solves our unfavourable circumstances, our unfavourable position.

The Lord is not vindictive, He does not want to punish us. Punishment has come only to teach us. The punishment is there but coming from the affectionate hand to teach us, to improve us, to help us. We have to see all dangers like that.

So set yourself right – not others – and real peace you will find. And never try to enjoy the result of your actions. This is the key to a successful life, and happiness will flow from that. You will find the Infinite is your Friend.

Everything is a part and parcel of the Original, therefore God is manifested in everything. And it is not that we can sacrifice or negate everything and only God remains, otherwise why we are here? Our individuality and existence is real. So both sides must have some recognition. Harmony between them is truth proper. This is the conception of Mahaprabhu. There is polarity and also there is unity and harmony, and that is all-important. Dislocation is unhealthy. Proper adjustment is necessary. *Maya* (misconception) means dislocation. Provincial, local interests are clashing with each other as well as with the Absolute. But proper adjustment comes through achieving understanding of the Absolute. Such understanding brings true harmony. All these things should be discussed and understood.

Disciple: How can we practically understand and apply the principle of harmony?

Srila Guru Maharaj: In your conception what does harmony mean?

Disciple: I understand that, strictly speaking, harmony is a musical term referring to different musical tones which are in balance with each other.

Srila Guru Maharaj: In a choir or an orchestra many instruments are being played or many singers are singing so the variety will be a credit to the harmony. Different types of instruments are being played but there must be harmony there, and the highest harmony depends upon how the many different instruments are being played in tune. Hundreds of different instruments are playing, preparing the music – yet they must all be attuned to the conductor. So sacrifice, dedication in its highest degree, will be of such a nature that it can accommodate and tolerate all differences. Therefore by toleration harmony will increase. The highest type of harmony can tolerate any type of opposition. It is all-accommodating. In this way, the highest conception of dedication means there is the accommodation of an infinitely number variety within it; and its sweetness will increase more and more.

So there are different instruments making different tunes from different strata of sound but they are all tuned to one. Plurality is connected to one centre and is giving some sweet, soothing feeling of sentiment. Similarly we can see that the earth and all the planets are each moving in their individual ways but are connected to another force. The moon is moving around the earth, and there are so many planets moving in relation to other planets which in turn are moving in their own way, But all are moving around the sun. Variety meets unity in different plans of movement. That is harmony. This applies everywhere, including the plane of colour and the plane of sound. Many branches meet together in the trunk of a tree, the trunk harmonises the many leaves.

Disciple: In the Absolute sense does discord bring harmony?

Srila Guru Maharaj: In the highest Absolute there is room to accommodate everything, otherwise it can't be Absolute. If we consider something to be Absolute but can still find some thing to be outside of that, then it cannot be Absolute. The Absolute accommodates everything. In Him the enemy is not an enemy! The Centre is everywhere, there is no circumference. In that plane only God can be traced everywhere and He cannot be our enemy.

Zero Conception is Unsatisfactory

The theistic school says, “‘Absolute’ means Absolute Good. It is not zero. Everything is fully represented there. The whole is so great that it can accommodate all.” However Sakaracharya sacrificed plurality and accepted only oneness, saying, “Enemies and friends all become nothing. They become jumbled together.” Such a thing is possible only in the zero-conception. However Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu explained, “What Sankaracharya gave is not proper acceptance of the revealed truth. Both variety and oneness must be recognised.”

In one Upanisad it is said, “There is no variegatedness.” And Sankaracharya says, “There is no plurality but only oneness, *brahman*.” Yet Mahaprabhu says, “No! Variety also exists.

Otherwise there would be no necessity of saying anything whatsoever, as all would unanimously agree. Rather, there is one who is the Master and all else are subordinate; and they are active in a system – the controlled and the controller.” He explained, “If you say that variety does not exist then what is the necessity of so much discussion? To whom have you come to preach? And if there is no variety then what is the necessity of preaching to those who are already one with you? Illusion also has its existence, otherwise why have you come to try to remove illusion? If *Maya* (misunderstanding and misconception) does not exist then why are you preaching?

It is a reality that there is always the possibility of misconception. Therefore there is always the necessity of a Guru to teach the truth. There is not only the Absolute conception but also the relative, provincial conception. And they both co-exist. This is called *cid-vilasa* which is not the negation of particular thing but the adjustment of everything with the Whole, the Absolute, the Centre. Carity and oneness both exist simultaneously and this is called *achintya bheda-abheda tattva*; and this is the all-accommodating conclusion of Sri Chaintanya Mahaprabhu. Stil Sankaracharyya accepts only one part. His conception is limited and not all-accommodating.

No Fear In Harmony

The only origin of fear is lack of harmony. Fear is born through disappointment resulting from lack of harmony. If that does not exist then there is no place for fear.

‘Undesirability’ is represented in Sanskrit as ‘apprehension’ or ‘fear’, and is regarded as something secondary to the Absolute. But how does it reach and become transformed into perfection? If we can introduce many interests into one common interest then there is harmony – no fear, and all is perfect.

At present we are suffering from the *mania* of separate interest. Only because we have deviated from our common Master, our common Guardian, we have come to suffer the disease of apprehension. If one

Master is common to all then no apprehension can arise, we will feel true unity amongst ourselves. If we fall on the ground, then with the help of the same ground we can again stand.

So forgetfulness of our Guardian is the cause of all the disastrous situations in which we find ourselves. The only way to get out of that disaster is to be reinstated in the idea of common Guardianship, and that is to be effected by the true *sadhus* (saintly persons) who have not deviated from God consciousness. With their help we have to appeal to the all-controlling agency. Then we can be reinstated in that echelon where we have our Master under whose Holy Feet we are to take shelter. If we can accept this, harmony will again be installed in our lives. So we are always to be conscious of our Guardian, the highest harmoniser – and that is true God consciousness.

The Flavour of Nectar

Krishna's two mothers Yasoda and Devaki do not have an open relationship with each other. Krishna's foster mother Yasoda is always afraid that Devaki and her Husband Vasudeva may come to claim Krishna as their child. How can it be that this happens? Similarly the members of Radharani's camp consider Chandravali's camp to be an anti-party to the main group of servitors. But the indirect section is always a necessary part of the Lord's Pastimes. Chandravail has more intellect, whereas Radharani has more sentiment. Similarly in all *rasas* (devotional Mellows) there is harmony and also discord. Some opposition enhances the play of dedication.

In *sakhya-rasa* (the mood for serving the Lord as a friend), at the time when Krishna began His play with His friends the cowherd boys there were usually two parties. One group sided with Krishna and the other with His brother Balaram. The cowherd boys were divided into two sections to represent opposite sides and they began to playfully fight. Then the punishment, for whichever party would be defeated, was that each was to carry a boy from the winning party on their shoulders. In this way a service-punishment was given.

Balaram was very strong, while in the opposing party Sridama is also very strong. In fact Sridama came into Krishna's party because Krishna is not as strong as Balaram. In this way their playing began. When the two parties fought, Balaram generally wouldn't accept that He was defeated. Rather His nature was that He would become enraged.

Sometimes a demon would enter one of the parties by taking the form of cowherd boy. In this manner Pralambasura and Baumasura mixed with the play of the cowherd boys seeking an opportunity to take a boy on their shoulders and abduct him. One day Pralambasura carried Balaram into the depths of the jungle, but when Balaram came to understand that He was being carried by a demon impostor He struck him with a great blow to the head. In this way the higher conception of truth runs - in order to not only remove all difficulties (personified as demons), but to positively fill up the whole heart with sweet nectar. And the sweetest nectar is personified in Krishna.

On another occasion Krishna was considering the case of another miscreant, Sisupala, and how he could be removed. For this purpose He convened a meeting between Himself, Balaram and Uddhava. But Balaram opposed everything Krishna said. Whenever Krishna wanted a policy to be adopted Balaram would object, "What is this policy? Just leave it to Me, I shall kill him outright! What need is there of all these politics? – I don't understand." All the while Uddhava, who by nature is not partial to violence, tried to pacify Balaram. The example of enhancement of the beauty of the Lord's Pastimes by discord and opposition is represented very cleverly in this story, in an ornamental way.

Masuladhara, a name of Balaram meaning "the wielder of the club-like weapon," gives us a hint that he doesn't delight in the finer mental level of intellect and politics. He likes to solve everything with the strike of His club. So in Balaram we find less intelligence but stronger force. Still the greatest, most subtle opposing forces can only be harmonised by Krishna. 'Harmon' means to control opposite forces.

Lord Ramachandra expressed, “While His own brother Laksmana instead stressed the opposite angle of vision saying, “The brother is the worst type of enemy because when he emerges from the mother’s womb the elder brother can no longer suck her breast, indeed the elder brother is not only deprived of his mother’s milk but is also dispossessed of his mother’s lap, as the new brother captures that as well.” So opposite conception have to be accommodated.

West Meets East

Disciple: We are all trying to be devotees but sometimes we see that there is some differentiation made between the Western and Indian devotees.

Srila Guru Maharaj: You have so many differences such as your hair, eyes, etc.!

Disciple: These are material differences.

Srila Guru Maharaj: But these are all drawn from the spiritual, they cannot demand any originality of their own.

There are so many things to be understood. It is found that in the presence of Krishna at Puskaratirtha the whole of the Yadu dynasties, including such a host of great personalities, were annihilated before His eyes, but these dynasties fought in order to reveal the deeper realities of the plane of the soul. Whatever He wills is truth proper. Can you understand this? Krishna was a sightseer! He simply watches. How can you adjust to that? Can you understand that fighting is life?

All the Pandavas including Arjuna were submissive to King Yudhisthira but still they sometimes revolted against him.

Peace – like in the deep slumber of *brahma-nirvana* – that is wanting in vitality; it is not true lasting peace. And the Absolute Truth is not impersonal but a Person.

Disciple: My desire is to see Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s unity, to see full harmony.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Harmony presupposes independent thinking, but in consonance with the common plane. When a mother cooks food, one child may say, “This is bitter”, another may say, “This is salty”, and the other “This is sour”. So where there are many varieties there must be the question of life. Variety shows that life is present. In diversity there is polarity within unity, otherwise simple “unity” means jumbling everything together – a dead unity.

Vishnu does not represent just one feature but infinite features which accommodate infinite possibilities. Krishna is *akhila rasamrta-murti* (the emporium of all nectarean mellows). Different groups of His servitors have so many diverse elements. Even Radharani and Chandravali compete with each other. They each head separate camps which fight in competition to satisfy Him. We have to understand how all this is possible. Mildly, with humility, we have to try to follow.

In the parliament there is an opposition party but it is there to enhance the work of the main party. In this way the direct and the indirect combine in order to make the government complete. And if that principle is applied everywhere it is not difficult to understand the nature of difference. We are not to try to create another world but to understand what already exists. Why is it so? What is the underlying meaning behind it? What are the differences between Krishna and Balaram? Balaram sometimes side with Duryodhana and Krishna sides with the Pandavas, yet Krishna and Balaram are almost one and the same. So how are we to understand that? What is your answer? Do you think it is all bogus?

Disciple: I can simply say I came to the Gaudiya Math for Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s gift of Love.

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, this is true. And love means that there is classification amongst brothers. Rupa Goswami gave the explanation: “*aher iva gatih premnah svabhava-kutila bhavet.*” That is, just as a serpent moves in a crooked way so similarly is the nature of Love’s progress. The nature of affection is not straightforward because it has to accommodate everything in it. Everything possible in existence is accommodated in love. Love means sacrifice to such a high degree

that it can embrace everything. The movement of love is generally crooked and, for the satisfaction of Krishna, it has been designed in this way by the Lord's Divine Power *Yogamaya* in order to prevent any staleness or sterility from entering the Pastimes. So try to adjust to this. Don't be eager to create another world.

His Sweet Play

To do away with opposition, greater harmony is necessary. And in the higher type of harmony opposition even enhances the beauty of the harmony and helps it. When harmony is successful then it is found to be the necessity of beauty. Krishna represents beauty and His harmonising capacity supersedes everything. There is nothing He cannot harmonise and all enemies become friends in that harmony. In so many ways this is to be accommodated. The Lord is the centre of highest harmony. He is sweetness, He is our Master and He is the Divine Love of us all.

Chandravali is in opposition to Radharani yet by *Yogamaya* the competition is producing more satisfaction for Krishna. Everything is for Him. Through *akhila-rasamrta murti* all possible types of ecstasies are harmonised, nothing is neglected. Justification of all existence is found there. Diversity and unity that is all to satisfy His purpose. Radharani Herself said, "The other *gopis* (cowherd ladies) do not know, I have no objection if they come forward to serve Krishna for My only concern is for Krishna's satisfaction – My concentration is always there, but the standard of their service isn't so exclusive as to give full satisfaction to Him properly. That is my objection. They rush forward to serve Krishna but they do not know how to fully satisfy Him, otherwise I would allow them to. "In this way Radharani's statement justified Her feeling. This statement of Radharani, where She does not consider Her devotion to be commonplace in the company of those exclusive servitors competing for Krishna's affection – that is Her special beauty.

Her degree and intensity of endeavour to satisfy Krishna is above all others. Krishna represents the whole play, He is the centre

and the source of everyone's love. But certain servitors like Lalita and Vishakha are directly serving Radharani; while there are also those in Chandravali's camp who are serving her in opposition to Radharani. That anti-party group is essential, just as the opposition party is necessary in a democratic parliament.

What is the purpose of this world? That is known only to Him. The first verse of Bhagavatam states, He alone is fully aware of the purpose of His activity. He is the Absolute Autocrat, He doesn't have to explain Himself to anyone. Everything is for Him. Also, in some way He is for us.

*aham bhakta paradhino
hy asvatantra iva dvija
sadhubir grasta-hrdayo
bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyah*

Srimad Bhagavatam 9.4.57

“I do not know anyone but My devotees. All the saints are my sweetheart, and I am also their sweetheart. They do not know anyone but Me and I also don't care to know anyone but them.”

He is for the devotees and the devotees are for Him. That is the Substance and the Potency, the Enjoyer and enjoyed, the Positive and negative, the Served and the servitor – both combined make the Whole. The Subject and the object.

No subject can exist without an object. Subject means the thinking thinker, and there must be something to be thought otherwise the subject cannot exist. There must be some thinker and then recognition of a particular thing.

Disciple: Radharani sends Her different associates to canvass on Her behalf. Does Chandravali also have her associates canvassing for Her?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Yes, there is a clash between Radharani's followers like Lalita and Vishakha and the followers of Chandravali such as Saibya and Padma. Bhaktivinod Thakur has written, “As the

attendant of Radharani's camp, I do not like to see that area in Vrindavan where the camp of Chandravali is, because Padma's interest is always to take Krishna from Radharani's special place to Chandravali's camp and if Krishna goes there then our place will become dark." But still opposition is necessary in the development of different levels of service just as hunger or fasting is necessary for relishing food. It is all designed only to intensify the standard of service.

And what degree of attraction and service to Radharani do we find in Lalita devi? If a drop of perspiration is found on the feet of Radha or Govinda (Krishna) she prays for one hundred thousand bodies to busily remove that perspiration. This sort of intense devotion is the unit of measurement to gauge love for one's beloved. This is the inner feeling. Waves of such nature come from within one who comes in connection with that Vrindavan proper.

In Goloka Vrindavan, the abode of Sri Krishna, there are so many parties. The Pastimes there appear to be similar to the competition that goes on here in this world, but the difference is all in the degree of sacrifice the devotee has for their Lord. The life of a devotee is a life of endless sacrifice.

The *Gopis* of Vrindavan are perfectly self-forgetful of their own interest and well-being; they are cent percent devoted not only in the present but also in the eternal future. There they live in the land of mercy, beauty, charm and affection; the plane of Absolute surrender. And that is the highest plane of our life. Nothing less than wholesale surrender is required there. As Krishna states, "If you give yourself wholesale to Me then I will give Myself wholesale to you."

Srila Rupa Goswami has given us an example of the gradation of service: When Krishna is at the summit of Govardhana hill and he sees Balaram and His sakhya friends playing in the pasturing ground below, He also sees Yasoda with all her helpers busily preparing His meal – all the dasya servitors are seen to be engaged in some arrangement under the direction of Yasoda. Chandravali, with her group, is approaching a particular meeting place; while His beloved

Srimati Radharani is coming with Her friends to an appointed place to be united with Krishna. All the different groups represented together around Govardhan are assembling there – *santa*, *dasya*, *sakhya*, *vatsalya*, and *madhura* – all are in His sight. He is overseeing everything. So very many affectionate servitors are all vying for His attention. But His eyes are always drawn to Srimati Radharani and Her group.

Even Lakshmi devi – the Goddess of Fortune and wife of Lord Vishnu – wanted to participate in the *rasa lila* of those simple cowherd girls of Vrindavan, the *Gopis*, but She could not enter. For that market – that place of the *rasa-lila* pastime is so very exclusive. Although She has all the wealth and grandeur of Lord Sri Vishnu in Vaikuntha still, unsatisfied, she is running to join in that great dance in which Krishna is at the centre.

No capitalist can enter that market and open a shop there for He has the full monopoly. There is only one commodity in the market and that commodity is Krishna consciousness.

The earth itself is feeling the charming union with Krishna by the divine touch of His Feet. The birds, insects, His friends – everything in the environment – is singing in His sweet play. Only unconditional exclusive Divine Love can enter there. So much so, the attraction of Krishna has captured the hearts of everyone there wholesale. God's grace is of such charming, intense nature that there is no way out but to serve the sweetness – not by fear or by hope, nor by the sense of duty, but all are helplessly attracted to sweet Krishna. Living harmony reigns there in its most natural and intense form. The servants of that quarter feel they cannot live without that service. That is their food.

Srimati Radharani prays, “You have captured My heart fully. Every atom of My body wants only You but the circumstances are so cruel that we are parted. So I will jump into that deep well, taking My life. I pray You will come and take My position and I will take Yours. Oh Krishna, Oh Sri Nandanandan. Then You will realise what hopelessness I am going through and will understand My trouble.”

In that self-same mood Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, “My friends save Me by showing Me Krishna. Otherwise I can’t maintain My existence! What I once saw, touching My heart like lightning then withdrawing, show Me once again for I cannot tolerate the separation. How many times can one die in a second to earn that fortune, to get a moment’s perception of Krishna? I am ready to die millions of times. My heart bursts without having a second view of that wonderful thing! I had a little experience previously, but beauty and sweetness can be so cruel! If I don’t get that vision I shall die.”

About the Author

His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj, the beloved guardian of all the pure conclusions of the Absolute Personal Truth, appeared on this earth in 1894 in the simple village of Hapaniya, meaning ‘Sweet Waters’, within the golden *mandala* of Nadia, West Bengal.

That auspicious Holy Place of Hapaniya was illuminated with the pastimes of Lord Gauranga Mahaprabhu, and is just a short distance from Nabadwip, the centre of the Lord’s *adi-lila* pastimes. Appearing in this divine setting of pure Vaishnava association, Srila Guru Maharaj not only danced in the footsteps of the golden Lord Sri Chaitanya’s ongoing eternal sankirtan party, but also synthesised the pure essence of all the previous saints realisations into increasingly ever sweeter and sweetest prose of praise. And if received with a drop of humility his realisations have the miraculous power to dissolve the hardest diamond heart into a condition of nectarean Divine Love. Indeed, Srila Guru Maharaj once stated, “If you just once chanted the Name ‘Gauranga’ purely you will melt, you won’t be able to maintain your form.” So if we can hear from the pure agent of Divinity submissively – without criticism and envy – those revelations we receive will change our hearts forever, and accordingly, to the degree of our *sraddha* (faith), we will be personally transformed, so as to be able to actually live in those transcendental realisations.

The *tridandi-sannyas* name ‘Sri Bhakti Rakshak’ bestowed upon our Srila Sridhar Maharaj by his beloved master – Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad – means ‘Guardian of the Treasure House of Bhakti’, pure, exclusive dedication to Their Lordships Sri Sri Radha-Govindasundarjiu.’

Yet Srila Sridhar Maharaj saw himself rather as a gatekeeper whose position it was to give entrance, or a visa, into that transcendental land of Divine Love. And Srila Guru Maharaj stressed that though the passport is easy to obtain – by the grace of Their all-merciful Lordships Nityananda Prabhu and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu – the visa which will allow entrance to certain destinations is not so easily attained. Purity has a price, and the value of our purity will be measured by the degree of sacrifice and surrender we have to the Centre.

Srila Guru Maharaj is, without doubt, the personification of *sharanagati*, self surrender to the highest degree. As the transcendental gatekeeper he was fully conscious and conversant with all of the illustrious conclusions of the revealed scriptures, and he even illuminated certain priceless, hidden treasures of scriptural truth he had been posted to protect from exploitation and misrepresentation. Our beloved Srila Guru Maharaj was found to be graced with a mild and tolerant disposition, personifying the perfect example of devotion explained in the *siksastakam* verses of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. So much so that if Mahaprabhu’s eight sacred *siksastakam* prayers were to be concentrated and personified then they would surely be named Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Dev-Goswami, the living incarnation of Sri Gauranga’s sankirtan spirit of compassion for the fallen souls.

Every atom of the form of the divine personality of Srila Sridhar Maharaj was gloriously united with the corresponding atoms of the Transcendental form of our Lord. And this is the Absolute Harmony Srila Guru Maharaj invites us all to come and live within. The inner herald calls us to come and live in that divine civilisation where we, like he, can have complete respect and care for each other, and for every unit of that all-charming environment.

In remembrance of our beloved Ranee.
Sri Sri Prapanna-jivanamritam, verse 5.1

*raksiyati hi mam krishno
bhaktanam bandhavas ca sah
ksemam vidhasyatiti yad
visvaso 'traiva grhyate*

“Certainly Sri Krishna will protect me, because He is the friend of the devotees. He will definitely bless us with all auspiciousness and success.”

Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Maharaj